(SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Pig iron is supplied to consumers in accordance with the distribution guidelines laid down by the Joint Plant Committee. No allotment is done by the plants themselves.

(d) and (e). There is no system of monthly allotment of pig iron to any unit. Under the present guidelines, supplies are made to individual units prorated to their entitlement which is worked out on the basis of past three years offtake subject to the party registering its demand. The intention is to ensure equitable distribution to the extent possible. The company was offered 200 tonnes of pig iron in 1987-88. However, they paid for and lifted only 150 tonnes.

To the extent where the demand of the customer exceeds their allocation, they are permitted to import the material.

Decline in production of pepper, ginger etc.

1115. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of pepper, ginger, turmeric, chillies declined between 1985-86 and 1986-87;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that India's productivity of pepper was 273 Kg. compared to 1605 Kg. a hectare in Brazil and 3173 in Malasiya where similar agro-climatic conditions prevail;

(d) if so, what are the reasons therefor and the steps taken by Government to introduce better agro-techniques; and

(e) the area in hectares of pepper gardens in the Country and the area already taken up for rejuvenation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The reasons for lower production are generally the adverse weather conditions, low productivity in case of pepper, decrease in area in case of ginger, chillies and turmeric.

(c) Productivity of pepper in India is low compared to other countries.

(d) The reasons for low productivity of pepper in India are :

(i) High percentage of unproductive and senile vines;

(ii) Cultivation of poor yielding varieties;

(iii) Non-adoption of recommended agronomic practices; and

(iv) Incidence of pest and diseases.

The steps taken by the Government to introduce better agro-techniques include production and distribution of pepper rooted cutting of high yielding varieties, distribution of input minikits to small and marginal farmers, distribution of sprayers at subsidised rate, laying out and maintenance of pepper demonstration plots and rehabilitation of existing pepper gardens.

(e) The total area under pepper in the country was 1.37 lakh hectares in 1986-87. **It is proposed to rejuvenate 2500 ha. of pepper gardens in the VIIth Five Year Plan.**

Sugarcane Price

1116. SHRI VISHWASRAO RAMRAO PATIL : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether sugarcane prices have been recently announced for the period January-December, 1988;

(b) whether the Sugarcane Board has taken into consideration the expenses incurred in the transportation of sugarcane